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ABSTRACT

Three groups of college students were exposed to a 22 minute interview with a cerebral palsied person, in either an audio, video, or transcript format. An expectancy questionnaire covering such aspects as academic and vocational achievements, communication with the public, ability to handle put downs, and effectiveness of sexual expression was administered before and after exposure to the disabled person through one of the formats. Findings replicated an earlier study of M. Everhart's, which showed no single trend, but some items reflecting more sensitivity to video and others to transcript formats. (CL)

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Catastropic Impairment and Student Expectancy: Multi-Media Experiences

Today, increasing numbers of people with serious multi-restrictive impairments seek meaningful access and admission to all phases of social intercourse. In their efforts to move toward meaningful social and vocational interactions they find the unimpaired public to be reserved, or resistant, as a rule rather than as an exception. The social and vocational interactions of people having disabilities are probably shaped in critical ways by the functional expectancies of the public. Because of this, there is a need for the development of expectancy modification procedures. These procedures can be put to use in evolving a constructive, nonresistant, expectancy in the public toward persons with multi-restrictive impairments.

A series of exploratory experiential studies is being conducted that attempt to provide students in the helping professions with deeper understanding of the needs of the disabled and realistic expectancies for their ultimate achievements. Modern curricula have been enhanced so that intern and extern experiences may provide the student with chances to meet people with severe diabilities. Yet many professionals encounter the disabled and formulate their functional expectancies for the first time at their work setting.

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The present study reflects a pair of objectives. The first is to expose students in the helping professions to a brief, but in-depth, experience with a person with a catastropic disability. The second goal is to attempt to determine the differential efficacy of several media formats in changing students' expectancies concerning that person.

A sizable body of research regarding the relative efficacy of video and audio tape as opposed to written transcripts indicates strongly that video tape messages tend to induce more opinion-change than do audio tape messages, and, in turn are more effective in general than written information. (Frandsen, 1963; Haugh, 1952; and Wilke, 1934). On the other hand some studies have found no differences, as with Tannenbaum & Kerrick (1954) in the effectiveness of any one media over another. The addition of an individual manifesting a severe physical impairment in recorded interview situations raises questions about the relative efficiency, in generating expectancy changes, from the perspective of multi-media presentations.

This study describes attempted changes in attitudes and expectancies toward a disabled person before and after exposure to one of three types of media presentations about that person. It is essentially a replication of a pilot study by Everhart (1980) who explored the multi-media effectiveness of changing expectancies in college students about a severely handicapped person. She used video tape, plus a cassette copy and a typed transcript. The measures were a series of Likert-type expectancy scales. The subjects were college students with a current interest in psychology or social work. Everhart's results reflected no single trend; out of a group of nine expectancies, about the disabled person, five were modified through transcript presentation, the other four reflected significant efficiencies for the video presentation.

Method

The video tape in the present study is a 22-minute interview with an individual with a catastropic impairment. Catastropic impairment implies serious restriction of speech, locomotion, and dexterity. The individual on the tape has cerebral palsy. There is severe dysarthria; locomotion is accomplished by pushing a wheelchair backwards with the left foot; and the person cannot self-feed of button. However, the interview reveals techniques and procedures which were useful for this person in reducing the handicapping aspect of the disability. It also describes how the person became meaningfully employed as a mental health professional and developed a meaningful community and family life. The audio tape and the typed transcript used in this study were taken directly from the video tape.

The measurements of expectancy were accomplished by ten seven-point Likert-type scales. These were essentially the same as Everhart used in her study with just a few minor modifications. Items concerned areas such as: academic and vocational achievements; communication with the public; ability to handle put-downs; and effectiveness of sexual expression. These items were given to three groups of students before and after exposure to the disabled person through one of three media formats. The Audio Group hand an N of 11, Video Group had an N of 8, Transcript Group had an N of 11. A Control Group with an N of 9 took the scales at the beginning and end of a regular class period. Contamination was avoided by running all subjects simultaneously.

The description and scales are found in the Appendix.

Results

Mean Pre- and Post- Treatment Scores for the Expectancy Questionnaire are presented in Table 1. The different scores between Pre- and Post- administration of the ten scales were computed, using a one-way, unweighted mean analysis of variance for each of the ten items on the test. All items except h (which dealt with self-help satisfaction) were significant beyond the .01 level of confidence, and results are presented in Table 2

Table 1

Mean Post-treatment Scores for Expectancy Questionnaire

	Control N = 9		Audio N = 11		Video N = 8		Transcript N = 11	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Pos
a - Academic Achievement	3.00	3.00	4.00	6.63	4.25	5.00	3.09	6.1
b - Vocational Achievement	2.40	2.60	4.36	6.00	3.00	5.75	3.00	6.2
c - Public Communications	3.30	3.00	4.00	6.18	2.62	5.00	4.36	6.6
d - Public Put-downs	3.00	3.11	4.18	6.54	3.37	5.75	4.00	6.5
e - Effective Sexual Expression	1.90	2.10	2.63	4.54	2.00	3.27	2.63	6.1
f - Social Status	3.00	3.00	3.09	5.09	3.75	5.25	3.45	6.0
g - Mobility	3.00	2.90	3.45	5.18	2.75	4.75	2.90	5.7
h - Self-help Satisfaction	3.70	4.00	5.09	5.90	4.25	5.13	5.27	6.5
i - Self-affirming Confidence	3.20	3.20	4.90	6.63	3.63	6.25	4.54	6.6
j - "Coke date"	4.00	3.70	4.63	5.18	3.63	5.25	3.72	5.3

Table 2

Results of ANOVA for Project Questionnaire

Item	MSe	F	P*
a - Academic Achievement	1.067	17.812	<.001
b - Vocational Achievement	2.099	9.977	<.001
c - Public Communications	2.8484	5.743	<.01
d - Public Put-downs	1.887	8.211	<.001
e - Effective Sexural Expression	2.134	8.278	<.001
f - Social Status	2.644	6.598	<.01
g - Mobility	2.56	5.199	<.01
h - Self-ehlp Satisfaction	2.96	.536	>.1
i - Self-affirming Confidence	1.996	5.625	<.01
j - "Coke date"	1.34	5.098	<.01

*based upon DF 3, 35

Post-hoc testing, using a significance level of .01, was performed on all significant ANOVA results; utilizing Newman-Keuls techniques, paired comparisons between the Transcript, Audio, and Video Groups with the Control Group were significant. Paired comparisons were significant for items e, f, and j: (effectiveness of sexual expression, level of social status, and having a Coke with Tom, respectively). For item e (sexuality) the Transcript Group registered more change from pre- to post- than either the Video or Audio Groups. For item f (social status) the Audio Group showed more change than the Video Group. Finally, the Transcript Group showed more change than the Audio Group on item j (Coke with Tom).

Discussion

The present study essentially replicates the trends which Ms. Everhart reported in her first study with some items reflecting more sensitivity to video while others were "transcript sensitive". A pair of contrasting theories can be brought into play in examining the differences that were found in the differential efficiency of the several items in modifying expectancies. The first draws on work by Chaiken & Eagly (1976). They suggest that simple messages are easily understood when presented through video or audio tape; conversely, the comprehension of difficult messages is better accomplished via the written word. Another theory offered by Cacioppo & Petty (1981) suggests that supplemental information about people sending messages may be reinforced when the receiver is able to see and/or hear the sender.

In the first instance, using the Chaiken & Eagly approach, it might be postulated that some of the messages in the interview, for which ratings were asked, were more difficult to deal with by the subjects than other issues. In these instances the written text would offer a more accessible

understanding. For issues which the subjects found less demanding the video or audio presentation may have offered better access.

Cacioppo & Petty (1981) suggest that the subjects may have entered the observer situation with preconceptions about the interviewee. From this it may be postulated that as the subjects listened to or watched him such preconceptions were quickly reinforced by observation of the severety of his impairment, both aurally and visually. Again the written word and message became more accessible and comprehensible than the recorded version.

The present writers speculate about what would happen if an actor, with no speech impediment, were to dub in the interviewee's responses. This would reduce the problem of understanding inherent in listening to someone with a speech impediment; one important variable, which may be muddying the waters, would be eliminated. This speculation leads to another experimental design which represents the next logical step in this set of studies.

APPENDIX

"ABOUT TOM"

Tom is a 51 year old, male, with cerebral palsy, mixed type, with some spasticity, mostly athetoid. All four limbs are affected. Tom has severe speech impairment; cannot feed himself or complete any buttoning or hooking. Mobility is achieved by pushing himself backwards in a wheelchair with his left foot. He learned how to use toilet paper at age 24, and can type slowly with the index finger of his left hand on a modified electric typewriter.

Based on this data, please rank the degree of satisfaction and accomplishment you would expect for this person.

a. What type of academic achievement would you expect?

limited educational achievement						successful completion of education
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

b. What kind of vocational achievement would you expect?

voc. achievement in a sheltered situation						success in a chosen profession
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

c. How well does he communicate with the public?

shrinks from contact with public						seeks contact despite difficulties
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

d. How would you expect him to handle public put downs?

withdraw and feel reduced self worth						asserts own feel and self worth
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

e. How effectively is his sexuality expressed?

finds no outlet for sexual expression						effectively expresses sexuality
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

f. What level of social status would you expect?

dissatisfying social status						satisfying social status
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

g. How mobil is the person?

restricted to home with aid						able to move about on own
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

h. How much self satisfaction would you expect with regard to self help such as dressing, going to the bathroom, getting in and out of a chair, etc.

little satisfaction						much satisfaction
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

i. How much self-affirming confidence would you expect?

little confidence						much confidence
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

j. How would you feel about accepting an invitation to have a Coke with Tom?

uncomfortable						comfortable
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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